

REMARKS

The claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 and 103 over various references, each of which has an effective date after the foreign priority date of the present application based on Applicant's claim for priority to Japanese Patent Application Serial No. 2000-304673, filed on October 4, 2000.

The Office has acknowledged (see Office Action, page 2, lines 3-5) that Applicant filed a copy of the priority document on September 28, 2001. As requested by the Office (see Office Action, page 2, lines 6-9), Applicant submits herewith a certified translation of the priority document together with a statement that the translation is accurate, as required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.56(a)(4). Applicant thus perfects the claim to foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 for the Japanese priority document originally filed October 4, 2000.

The certified translation is essentially identical to the present application. Therefore all pending claims benefit from the priority document's filing date of October 4, 2000. The applied references are all antedated and removed as prior art, because each applied reference is a U.S. patent with a § 102(e) filing date after October 4, 2000.

Applicant therefore requests that the Office withdraw the rejections and allow all pending claims.

In reviewing the above-captioned application file, the undersigned has noted that Applicant's Form PTO/SB/08 submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement on March 11, 2004, has not been acknowledged by the Office. A copy of the Form PTO/SB/08 is attached for the Examiner's convenience. The Office is, therefore, requested to return the initialed form to the undersigned as soon as possible.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even

entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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